OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN CHRIS CARNEY (D-PA) AS PREPARED

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER, MARITIME, AND GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT

JOINT HEARING ON
"SBInet: Does it Pass the Border Security Test?"

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Today we are here to examine efforts to secure the nation's borders through the Secure Border Initiative (SBI). The Management Investigation and Oversight subcommittee that I chair has held multiple hearing and briefings on this issue, including two joint subcommittee hearings in the 110th Congress.

I continue to be greatly concerned that SBInet will continue to cost US taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars will not providing the services we were sold at the inception of this program. I am also concerned that deadlines continue to be set for this program only to be pushed back when that deadline nears.

I would like to commend Secretary Napolitano for ordering a reassessment of SBInet. I also agree with her decision to redeploy the $50million of Recovery Act funding originally allocated for the SBI*net* and instead use that funding for "other tested, commercially available security technology along the Southwest border."

It is my hope that the Department will work quickly on this reassessment and as soon as particle deliver a solution that will once and for all secure our borders in a timely, cost effective manner.

I am extremely interested in discussing with our witnesses GAO's latest SBI*net* report entitled, *Secure Border Initiative: DHS Needs to Address Testing and Performance Limitations That Place Key Technology Program at Risk.*

In this report, GAO was asked to determine whether SBI*net* testing has been effectively managed, including the types of tests performed and whether they were well planned and executed. GAO was also asked to analyze the test results.

Some of the major findings of the report are as follows:

DHS has not effectively managed key aspects of SBInet testing.

There is evidence that changes made to system qualification test cases and procedures appeared to be designed to pass the test instead of being designed to qualify the system.

From March 2008 through July 2009, about 1,300 SBInet defects were found, with the number of new defects identified generally increasing faster than the number being fixed. This is a sign that the system isn't improving.

Given that key test events have yet to occur and will likely surface other problems, it is important for DHS to improve its procedures for addressing these problems. If it does not, it is unlikely SBI*net* will meet the Border Patrol's needs and expectations.

SBI*net* has been plagued with a number of technology and systems integration issues, and therefore has so far failed to live up to its billing by the Department and Boeing. SBI*net*'s continued failure to meet expectations brings to mind the Department's previous failed attempts at border security technology programs. The Obama Administration must assess the system it inherited and determine whether to continue to move forward with SBI*net* or to pursue another technology solution as part of its border security strategy.